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ABSTRACT

In 1976 El Centro College tightened its attendance policies--the bases for dropping students for excessive absences. Though operated under a common administrative system, each program, division, or individual instructor set up whatever policy seemed most appropriate. A faculty questionnaire examined the newly developed attendance policies and a follow-up one year later analyzed developments and effectiveness. A wide variety of policies was discovered: a student could be dropped after a range of 2-20 hours of absence; some instructors differentiated between "excused" and "unexcused" absences; some penalized students for cumulative tardies. Of faculty members responding, 83.7% used an attendance policy in common with their division or program; 38.2% enforced it "rigidly," and 55.9% "moderately"; 87.3% rated the policies as good. Over 90% of current policies had been in effect for two or more years. Non-attending students were dropped at a relatively stable rate of 15-20% per semester, with an apparent reduction trend in absences and drops as students recognized and adapted to the system. Student attendance was found to correlate with educational achievement and commitment. Highest absence and drop rates were in developmental courses and required general courses. Lowest rates were in sophomore and elective/career courses. Surveys are appended. (Author/MB)

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STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICIES AT EL CENTRO COLLEGE: THEIR RATIONALES AND RESULTS

by

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ABSTRACT

Faced with high absences and tightened V. A. restrictions, El Centro College in 1976 tightened its attendance policies: the bases for dropping students for excessive absences. Though operated under a common administrative system, each program, division, or individual instructor set up whatever policy seemed most appropriate for courses taught. This practicum has gathered those attendance policies, both by published statements and by questionnaire, and made a comparative study of their bases. Then, by a follow-up survey a year later, analyzed developments in these policies, as influenced by the relative effectiveness of their results.

A wide variety of policies was discovered: a student may be dropped after a range of 2 - 20 hours absence. Some differentiate between "excused" and "unexcused" absences; some penalize for cumulative tardies. Of faculty members responding, 83.7% use an attendance policy in common with their division or program. 38.2% enforce it "rigidly," 55.9% "moderately." Over 90% of current policies have been in effect for two or more years. 87.3% rate the policies as good. Non-attending students have been dropped at a relatively stable rate of 15 - 20% per semester, with an apparent reduction trend in absences and drops as students recognize and adapt to the system.

Student attendance was found to correlate with educational achievement and commitment. Highest absence and drop rates were in developmental courses and required general courses. Lowest absence and drop rates were in sophomore courses and elective/career courses. El Centro's attendance policies thus do seem to be accomplishing their purposes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 1

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE 3

PROCEDURES 8

RESULTS 9

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 26

APPENDICES

Appendix A - 1977 Questionnaire 34

Appendix B - 1978 Questionnaire 35

Appendix C - Attendance policies used by eighteen divisions, departments, or programs 36

Bibliography 41

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 - Absences after which student is dropped 15

Table 2 - Scope of attendance policy usage 16

Table 3 - Estimated degree of policy enforcement 18

Table 4 - Satisfaction with attendance policies, 1977 and 1978 . 20

Table 5 - Numbers of students dropped for non-attendance . . . 22

Table 6 - Numbers of students dropped for non-attendance by divisions, spring 1977 24

Table 7 - Numbers of students dropped for non-attendance by divisions, spring 1978 25

STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICIES AT EL CENTRO COLLEGE: THEIR RATIONALES AND RESULTS

INTRODUCTION

An oversimplified history of college attendance policies during the past three decades might be as follows:

During 1950's - strict attendance regulations. A student in a three-semester-hour course missing, say, three or four class hours for whatever reason might be denied credit for the course. He wasn't "dropped," necessarily; he might continue attending but not receive credit.

During 1960's - permissive attendance regulations. Courses were still taught predominantly by lecture method, with the attitude, "If a student can pass the tests without attending the lectures, let him. Why even record attendance?"

During 1970's - teaching methods using less lecture, more classroom participation and interaction -- the benefits of which the student can receive only if physically present -- have brought reemphasis on the importance of regular attendance.

In addition to these shifting educational trends related to attendance, a specific attendance crisis affected El Centro College (and many others) during the 1975-1976 school year. During Fall 1975 semester, procedures were changed (at V. A. request) to include "last date of attendance" on all students dropped from rolls. Then in the spring, the Veterans Administration indicated that because of our "untimely notifications," the school was responsible for overpayments to veterans

between their last date of class attendance and their official removal from rolls (not uncommonly a two-month gap). During March and April, 1976, El Centro received 140 such overpayment letters from the V. A., asking us to repay almost $70,000!

This crisis coincided roughly with the burgeoning of government educational grants. During the spring semester of 1976, of El Centro's 7,000 students, about 1800 received veterans benefits and another 1800 received other types of educational grants, notably B. E. O. G. (Basic Educational Opportunity Grant) -- a combined total majority of the student body! Since this was also a period of high unemployment, many admittedly entered college under these programs who were unable to find a job; this was their source of income. Some became conscientious students, taking advantage of this opportunity to get an education. But others were not conscientious students: Absence rates were high. Attrition rates were high; in beginning courses it was not uncommon that only about half the original students completed the semester's work.

Faculty seemed caught in the middle. The existent attandance policy used a double mailing: once to warn the student, then (at some indefinite time later, at teacher's discretion) to notify him he had been dropped. Faculty members were often somewhat parancid about the attrition rate, and felt it to be a disparagement of their teaching ability. Many had therefore been willing to overlook numerous absences and leave students on the roll as long as possible, in an attempt to get a few more through the course with a passing grade.

Planning thus began in Spring 1976 for an attendance crackdown the following fall semester. Some feared that enrollment would drop as a

result, and that faculty members would join the unemployed. But most recognized the need, and believed students would gradually accept and conform to the system. Rolls were coded to show which students were veterans subject to V.A. regulations. Reporting forms were redesigned, and reduced to a single mailing -- informing a student whose absences had become excessive that he would be dropped, with a grade of "W," on a specific date (ten class days after instructor's action form), unless he contacted instructor immediately. Even thereafter, reinstatement was possible if instructor decided student stood a reasonable chance of passing this course, and could state these terms in written contract form.

Such an attendance policy still remains in effect, with minor adjustments having been made meanwhile. But there is not one single attendance policy: each instructor or group of instructors was asked to develop and operate whatever policy and deadlines seemed most appropriate for the courses taught.

This practicum has gathered those attendance policies, both by published statements and by questionnaire, and made a comparative study of their bases. Then, by a follow-up survey a year later, analyzed developments in these policies, as influenced by the relative effectiveness of their results.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Student absences from class create a number of serious problems. Most obviously, absences reduce the amount the student receives/learns in a course, perhaps to the extent of preventing his successful course completion. And students returning after absences demand extra time and work from the teacher (catch-up tutoring, make-up exams, in-class

delays for extra questions, etc.)

> Frequent absences of pupils from regular classroom learning experiences disrupt the continuity of the instructional process. The benefit of regular classroom instruction is lost and cannot be entirely regained, even by extra after-school instruction. Consequently, many pupils who miss school frequently experience great difficulty in achieving the maximum benefits of schooling. Indeed, many pupils in these circumstances are able to achieve only mediocre success in their academic programs. The school cannot teach pupils who are not present. The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study in order to reach the goal of maximum educational benefits for each individual child. The regular contact of the pupils with one another in the classroom and their participation in well-planned instructional activity under the tutelage of a competent teacher are vital to this purpose.[1]

Then too, absent students hurt those who are present: classroom activities -- for example, group or team projects -- may be thrown badly off balance, or rendered ineffective; and the morale of students present may be adversely affected.

> Excessive absenteeism keeps the individual student from taking full advantage of his educational opportunities. It also indirectly disrupts the education of his regularly attending classmates as teachers try to reteach the missed subject material.[2]

The teacher, because of preponderating policies of accountability, also has an increasing stake in the student's achievement:

> Accountability has now become an educational watchword....and faculty accountability...is directly and primarily tied to one output measure: the success of students in achieving stated objectives for a course, a program, or a degree....As a result, the new accountability is demanding increased attention to educational performance.[3]

[1]Scott Thomson, and David Stanard, Student Attendance and Absenteeism (Washington, D. C., The Practitioner), March 1975 (ERIC ED 102 682), p. 4.

[2]Nancy L. Karweit, Rainy Days and Mondays: An Analysis of Factors Related to Absence from School (Baltimore, Md., Johns Hopkins University), November 1973 (ERIC ED 086 927), p. 1.

[3]S. V. Martorana and Eileen Kuhns, Managing Academic Change (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1975), p. 3.

And generally, the accountable teacher expects that the student's chances for successful achievement may rise or fall in proportion to his attendance. Jenne analyzed the relationship between optional class attendance and test scores (using identical pre- and post-tests) with a group of health science students at Temple University. "Class attendance correlated .799 with proficiency gain on the test."[4] And Baum and Youngblood's research, based on 297 accounting students at Purdue University, found better attendance (M = .82) and a higher examination average (M = 61) in sections with a compulsory attendance policy (vs. .76 and 58, respectively, in sections without compulsory attendance).[5]

Why, then, are students absent? Illness is by no means the only cause. Kohler's study, for example, categorized three absence-causing problem areas:

1. Situations in the school relationship that affect the attitude of students toward regular attendance (19 problems identified)
2. External/environmental/socioeconomic situations (6 problems identified)
3. Personal problems of the individual student (14 problems identified)[6]

Levanto's findings, though based on high school students, may be applicable to the community college as well: Absenteeism is positively correlated with the second semester, older students, one-parent families, and low grades. Absenteeism is least on days with important tests and

[4]Frank H. Jenne, "Attendance and Student Proficiency Change in a Health Science Class," Journal of School Health, 43:125-126 (February 1973).

[5]John F. Baum and Stuart A. Youngblood, "Impact of an Organizational Control Policy on Absenteeism, Performance, and Satisfaction," Journal of Applied Psychology, 60:688-694 (December 1975).

[6]Lewis T. Kohler, The Student Absentee (Atlantic City, New Jersey, American Association of School Administrators), February 23, 1976 (ERIC ED 117 852), p. 5.

during final exams. Absenteeism is greatest on Mondays, then Fridays; it's lowest on Wednesdays and Thursdays.[7]

Karweit also explores "characteristics of absence as a variable." Her attendance monitoring system included a daily weather log; a log of school activities; a student questionnaire to determine both attitudes toward school attendance and travel information (how they traveled to school, distance, and time required); student grade and attendance records, etc. She found predictable correlations: students most likely to be drenched were most likely to be absent on a rainy day when no special activities were scheduled.[8]

Wright studied 135 Harvard undergraduates who had returned from voluntary leaves of absence, to determine (among other things) why they had left school. "Students withdraw from college because they experience high levels of stress -- both stress stemming from inner conflicts and stress generated by the college environment -- and because they lack sufficient ties to the college community to counteract the push from the stress."[9] Granted, in many ways the Harvard undergraduate differs radically from the urban community college student. Nonetheless, their causes for leaving school would seem to be similar in kind (if not in specific detail).

As Karweit further observes, "To some extent, excessive student

[7]Joseph Levanto, The Identification and Analysis of Factors Related to Secondary School Absenteeism, doctoral dissertation, University of Connecticut, 1973. Quoted in Thomson and Stanard, pp. 6-7.

[8]Karweit, p. 19.

[9]Erik Olin Wright, "A Study of Student Leaves of Absence," Journal of Higher Education, 45:235-247 (March 1973).

absenteeism reflects the failure of the school to win the student's attention in the face of strong competition from outside events."[10] On any day when a student must decide whether to attend school or do some competing activity, he will choose to do that which is most rewarding and/or avoid that which has most detrimental or unpleasant consequences. So theoretically, absenteeism could be reduced by making classroom attendance ipso facto more rewarding; and counseling procedures can help students deal with problems and stresses. But meanwhile, the student's decision may also be "weighted" by making absence more detrimental.

In short, most absences are arbitrary and avoidable: the student is physically able to come, but instead, makes some different choice. Choosing not to attend can become a habit: the frequently absent student is often forerunner of the disappearing student -- who is considering whether to continue coursework or to drop out (at least temporarily).

Faced with a high absence rate and its resultant problems, and with outside pressures, especially from the Veterans Administration, El Centro College has sought to reduce student absences through attendance policies.

Realistically, these attendance policies are not intended to force the feverish flu victim to attend class, nor to punish the working student who has an occasional job emergency. Rather, the target of these policies is the arbitrary absence. They make the student responsible for regular attendance, and confront the potential disappearing student with an in-or-out ultimatum. It thus seeks to raise the student's level of commitment to his education.

Each department or division, or in some cases each instructor,

[10]Karweit, p. 1.

states its/his own attendance policy on a program or course-by-course basis. These policies have been carried out. During the Fall, 1976, semester, a one-time administrative computer survey determined that 4,478 students were dropped for excessive absences from individual courses -- 18.6% of total course enrollments.[11]

Between the dictum and the resultant totals lies the policy area with which this paper has been concerned: the processes of El Centro's attendance policies.

PROCEDURE

The following procedures were followed:

1. All available written statements pertaining to attendance policy were gathered -- from catalogs, faculty manuals, division records, administrative memos, etc.
2. Preliminary interviews were conducted with the Dean of Students and Chairpersons of the instructional divisions, to determine any trends or group policies, and the manner of their formation.
3. A survey of full-time faculty was conducted in April 1977, using a brief, informal, open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix A). This time was selected to coincide with the spring semester's Absentee Reporting System deadline on April 21, 1977, which would bring maximum faculty attention to the attendance policies.
4. Information gathered was tabulated and categorized, to analyze 1977's existing policies -- their rationales and results.
5. A comparable faculty survey was conducted in April 1978, using a

[11]Don G. Creamer, Dean of Students, in memo to Division Chairpersons, January 12, 1977, Subject: Audit Report of Absentee Reporting System.

a questionnaire similar to 1977's but with slight modifications (see Appendix B). Again, timing was selected to coincide with the spring semester's Absentee Reporting System deadline on April 18, 1978, and resultant focus on attendance policies. This time, both full-time and part-time faculty members were surveyed.

6. Information gathered was tabulated, to analyze 1978's policies.
7. A comparison was made between Fall 1976, Spring 1977, and Spring 1978 responses -- to discover similarities and trends.

RESULTS

1. The following are existent attendance policy statements:

   In broad terms, the Dallas County Community College District has this policy on class attendance: "Students are expected to attend regularly all classes in which they are enrolled. Class attendance is the responsibility of the student. It is also the responsibility of the student to consult with his instructors when an absence must be excused." [12]

   The 1977-1978 Catalog includes the following statement in it. Rules and Regulations section:

   > Instructors are responsible for appropriate notification of attendance policy and procedures to all students enrolled in their classes. In cases where lack of class attendance is jeopardizing a student's grade, it is the responsibility of the instructor to apprise the student of this fact. Such notice shall be given by the issuance of a letter. If the student continues to miss the class, after a notice has been mailed, the instructor will drop the student from the class.
   > As a general rule, the administrator in charge of student services shall receive a preliminary notice in cases where absences have become so excessive as to endanger the student's class standing.

[12] El Centro College Faculty Manual, p. 22.

However, the primary responsibility for handling such cases rests with the instructor.
A student will be reinstated after having been dropped for excessive absences if, in the opinion of the instructor, the student reasonably could expect to complete the course satisfactorily after the attendance pattern is corrected.[13]

In somewhat more specific terms, El Centro College has this policy on class attendance: "All instructors must inform each student in writing of the attendance practice which will be followed in each of their classes. All procedures must be approved by your division chairman. When students' absences become excessive according to the written statement which you provide, you must drop them."[14]

2. A series of interviews with chairpersons of the instructional divisions disclosed that many divisions -- and/or programs within divisions -- have a general attendance policy which instructors adopt as is, or in some cases adapt to suit their own courses. These have been discussed and formulated by consensus of the faculty involved. The following eighteen "group policies" were reported as being in effect, and adhered to by all or most instructors in that group. (Copies of these policies are included as Appendix C.)

Mid-Management Program (in Business Division)
Communications Division (including English, speech, foreign languages)
Three programs in Developmental Studies Division:
  Reading Program
  Developmental Math Program
  Developmental Writing Program
Seven programs in Health Occupations Division
  Associate Degree Nursing Program
  Dental Assisting Program
  Medical Laboratory Technician Program

[13]The 1977-1978 Catalog of El Centro College, p. 60.

[14]Don C. Creamer, Dean of Students, in memo to All Faculty, August 23, 1976, Subject: Attendance Policy and the Absentee Reporting System.

Operating Room Technician Program
Radiologic Technology Program
Respiratory Therapy Program
Vocational Nursing Program
Human Development Division
Humanities Division (including art, music, drama, photography)
Three programs in Science and Math Division
Biology Department
Math Lab
Television and Radio Engineering Program
Social Science Division (including anthropology, government, history, police science, psychology, sociology)

3. A survey of full-time faculty was conducted in April 1977, using a brief, informal, open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix A). Responses were received from 87 faculty members (of 193 -- 45.1%).

4. Questionnaire responses were tabulated, to analyze 1977's attendance policies -- their rationales and results.

As a part of this questionnaire, each faculty member was asked his/her attendance policy -- a student is dropped after how many hours absence? These responses are tabulated in Table 1.

They were then asked, "Why this particular number of hours? Did any outside groups, such as state licensing boards, influence your attendance policy?" 52 responses were received to this question, falling into seven general (sometimes overlapping) categories, stating that their absence limit was

-reached by faculty consensus (e.g. "Division felt that this was as strict as we could afford to be.") N = 17.

-based on the nature of the course -- a percentage of total meeting hours, or class participation, or what was believed to be maximum student could afford to miss, or expect to make up (e.g. "Course work -- mostly performance -- doesn't lend itself to 'catching up.' Awkward and difficult at best to offer it a second time." "This class is based on interaction with other students; they must be there to learn experientially." "1/5 of the total class hours in the semester. More than 1/5 of a course is too much to miss." "Just because it figures out to two weeks absent.") N = 14.

-set in accordance with El Centro policies (but as noted above, El Centro policy does not specify hours) N = 10.

-set in accordance with district policies. N = 1.

-set in accordance with V. A. policies. N = 1.

-set in accordance with State Board of Nursing/examiners. N = 6.

-miscellaneous (e.g. "It seemed reasonable," "A nice round number," "Arbitrary decision," "More lenient here than in most schools because our students have not developed habits of responsibility," and "Don't know") N = 7.

Each faculty member then registered the scope in which their particular attendance policy is used:

-for my own individual classes. N = 11 (12.6%)

-by my whole division, department, or program. N = 75 (86.2%)

-other N = 0.

-no response N = 1 (1.1%)

Faculty members were asked, "Is this the same attendance policy you used last semester? Or if not, what changes were made, and why?"

79 (90.8%) reported using the same policy as last semester.

4 (4.6%) did not respond.

4 (4.6%) had changed policies, as follows:

"'10 class hours' added for V.A. purposes."

"Distributed according to current % of required attendance -- i.e. 10 hrs. of a full 3 hr. semester computes to less than our 70%-80%-90%. Example for a full 15 hr. course, must not miss more than 3 hours or 1/5 of the total class hours."

"Cut down on number of make-up days allowed per year -- from 10 to 8. Reason: Cost -- must hire substitute to be with the students while in the hospital for make-up days."

"Now dropped after 3 classes regardless of number of hours. Before, if they called in with a legitimate excuse, or what we thought was a good excuse, we did not drop them on 3 absences."

(NOTE: All four changes are in Health Occupations programs. The revised policies are included in Appendix C.)

Do you feel the Absentee Reporting System is good? Why? Or bad?

Why? Of 87 faculty members responding, 84 answered this question:

78 (92.9%) think it's good.

4 (4.8%) think it's bad.

2 (2.4%) think it's partly good/partly bad.

Of those who think the system is good, 49 took time to state reasons.

The reasons fell into three main categories:

-the importance and necessity of attendance for satisfactory course progress. (e.g. "If the students do not attend my lecture, it is difficult for them to apply the theory in the problems assigned in lab." "Clinical attendance is vital; skills can't be learned if students are not there." "Attendance counts as part of their grade. Since this policy started, attendance is better and absences are made up more." N = 11.

-builds student's responsibility and work habits. (e.g. "Influences students to accept the responsibility for their own behavior. Clear policy statements to students set limits." "Aids student in keeping up with his attendance and work patterns. Allows for confrontation and help with poor work and study habits." N = 9.

-the system's administrative efficiency and fairness. (e.g. "It is firm, reasonable, and upheld throughout the division." "Allows a teacher to 'weed out' those who are deadwood. And urges those who remain to come more regularly." "I feel the policy is good because it eliminates punitive grades (F) for failure to attend class. It also is a means of preventing students from getting very far behind in their work and then expecting a good grade at the end of the semester. The instructor has flexibility in establishing a reinstatement policy." "Protective device for both student and instructor. Is part of recourse process that student has to offset partiality on part of instructor." "A necessary nastiness; but as equitable and efficient as possible, I'd guess." N = 31.

The minority report included these negative remarks:

"Too strict. Illness, hospital stays, etc. deserve more consideration." "Too lax. Fewer absences should be allowed." "Some students take absent days just to use them up." "Students should have the right not to come to class, or to fail a course if they wish." "I do not believe in mandatory class attendance for adults, though I do believe in mandatory attendance for clinical practice." "Shows a lack of respect for student's ability to run his own affairs."

Suggested changes somewhat overlapped these complaints. On the Spring 1977 survey, 13 suggested changes:

-Two asked for stricter limits; one asked for less strict (either of which would be possible under the status quo on an individual, department, or division basis).
-Three urged school-wide uniformity (probably not possible, considering the variety of lab and clinical course schedules).
-Two proposed a later deadline -- being able to drop a student until last day of semester (vs. deadline 3-4 weeks before end of semester).
-Three wanted changes in the reinstatement system -- that it should be eliminated or made stricter; requiring student to complete missed work or deficiencies before reinstated, and limiting number of times a student may be reinstated.
-One stated that no "student should be dropped for excessive absences if the course grade remains at B or above."
-One "would prefer competency-based system, without semester structure or attendance rules -- but entirely based on positive achievements."

5. A follow-up survey was conducted in April 1978, using a comparable but slightly modified questionnaire (see Appendix B). Responses were received from 49 full-time (24.7%) and 53 part-time (33.1%) faculty members. N = 102.

6. Questionnaire responses were tabulated, to analyze 1978's attendance policies, to compare these with 1977's attendance policies, and to discover similarities and trends.

As on the previous year's questionnaire, each faculty member was asked his/her attendance policy -- a student is dropped after how many hours absence? (These responses are tabulated in Table 1.) Each member then registered the scope in which their particular attendance policy is used:

-by my whole division (full-time N = 20, part-time N = 16)

-by my whole program (full-time N = 21, part-time N = 5)

-just for my own classes (full-time N = 7, part-time N = 25)

-other (N = 0) no response (full-time N = 1, part-time N = 7)

These figures are compiled by divisions in Table 2.

TABLE 1

ABSENCES AFTER WHICH STUDENT IS DROPPED

	2 unexcused	2 - 6	2 abs. = 3 hrs.	2 abs. = 4 hrs.	3	3 abs. = 12 hrs.	3 lec. or 3 labs	4	5	3 cons. or 6 cum.	4 cons. or 8 cum.	4 cons. or 10 cum.	2 clin., 5 class	4 clin., 10 class	5 clin., 10 class	6 clin., 10 class	6 unexcused	6	6 cons. or 9 cum.	6 - 10	5 cons. or 8 cum.	7	8	9	10	10 - 12	12	15	20	no response	TOTAL N
1977																														
BUS.				3						1								4		1				1	1					11
COM.																		1	7					4					1	13
DEV.										3								2												5
F.A.A.							1											1						1					2	5
H.O.			1			2		1					1	3	8	1									5				4	26
H.D.									1														1	4						6
SCI.M.											1							2					1			1	2			7
SOC.SCI.																		12				1								13
		1	3	2		1	1	1		4	1		1	3	8	1		22	7	1		1	2	10	6	1	2		(7)	87
1978																														
BUS.		1																6											2	9
						1				1		1						9		1	1			3	1		1			20
COM.																			1					4					1	6
																			1	1		1		1						4
DEV.										1								3												4
										5															1					6
H.O.	1																								7				5	13
H.D.																		2						2					1	5
																										1				1
HUM.							1																	1					1	3
								1	2																		1		1	5
P.E.																	1.													1
								1										1												2
SCI.M.								1												1		1	1							4
											1							4									2	1	8
SOC.SCI.																		4												4
																		6								1				7
F-T	1	1					1	1		1							1	15	1	1		1	1	7	7				(10)	49
P-T						1		2	2	6		2						20	1	2	1	1		4	2	1	1	2	2	(4)	53

1978 responses: full-time instructors shown above part-time in each division.

TABLE 2

SCOPE OF ATTENDANCE POLICY USAGE

This particular attendance policy is used...

Full-time	By my whole division	By my whole program	Just for my own classes	No response
BUSINESS		6	3	
COMMUNICATIONS	6			
DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES	2	2		
HEALTH OCCUPATIONS	1	11		1
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	3		2	
HUMANITIES	1	2		
PHYSICAL EDUCATION			1	
SCIENCE & MATH	3		1	
SOCIAL SCIENCES	4			
	20	21	7	1
Part-time				
BUSINESS	4	2	10	4
COMMUNICATIONS	2			2
DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES	5		1	
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT			1	
HUMANITIES	1		4	
PHYSICAL EDUCATION			2	
SCIENCE & MATH	1	3	4	
SOCIAL SCIENCES	3		3	1
	16	5	25	7

Of 49 full-time teachers responding,

48 (98%) reported that they're using the same attendance policy as last year (1 reports becoming more strict; now drops after three hours absence).

Of 53 part-time teachers responding,

43 (81.1%) reported that they're using the same attendance policy as last year.

4 said "not applicable - not here last year."

4 did not answer this question (perhaps for same reason).

2 reported changes: one now drops "after 3 consecutive absences" and one now "includes nonsequential absences and missed tests."

Attendance policies are enforced

"rigidly" by 21 (42.9%) full-time and 18 (34%) part-time instructors

"moderately" by 27 (55.1%) full-time and 30 (56.6%) part-time instructors

"loosely" 1 (2%) full-time and 4 (7.5%) part-time instructors

(These figures are compiled by divisions in Table 3.)

TABLE 3

ESTIMATED DEGREE OF POLICY ENFORCEMENT

How would you say you enforce this policy?

Full-time	Rigidly	Moderately	Loosely	No response
BUSINESS	2	7		
COMMUNICATIONS	4	2		
DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES	2	2		
HEALTH OCCUPATIONS	9	4		
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	2	3		
HUMANITIES		3		
PHYSICAL EDUCATION		1		
SCIENCE & MATH	1	3		
SOCIAL SCIENCES	1	2	1	
	21	27	1	
Part-time				
BUSINESS	10	9		1
COMMUNICATIONS		3	1	
DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES	1	5		
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT		1		
HUMANITIES	2	3		
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	1		1	
SCIENCE & MATH	4	4		
SOCIAL SCIENCES		5	2	
	18	30	4	1

Do you feel the Absentee Reporting System is good? Why? Or bad? Why? Of 49 full-time faculty members responding, 48 answered this question: 44 (89.8%) think it's good;

4 (8.2%) think it's bad.

And of 53 part-time faculty members responding, 48 answered this question: 43 (81.1%) think it's good;

5 (9.4%) think it's bad.

(These figures, along with comparative figures for 1977, are compiled by divisions in Table 4.)

Favorable comments were received from 21 full-time instructors and 27 part-time instructors. These comments were along the same general lines as the previous year's: the importance and necessity of attendance for satisfactory course progress; building the student's responsibility and work habits; and the system's administrative efficiency and fairness.

Unfavorable comments (4 from full-time and 5 from part-time instructors) and suggestions (9 from full-time and 5 from part-timers) were also similar to last year's: "a time-consuming nuisance"; "too loosely defined and flexible (vs. hard and fast invariable guidelines)"; "shouldn't be applied to adults capable of setting their own priorities -- condescending"; "poor timing of deadlines within the system"; "reinstatement should be eliminated or made more strict"; "more effective facilities for make-ups would relieve many problems."

TABLE 4

SATISFACTION WITH ATTENDANCE POLICIES, 1977 AND 1978

Spring 1977	GOOD	BAD	BOTH	No response
BUSINESS	11			
COMMUNICATIONS	13			
DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES	5			
FINE AND APPLIED ARTS	5			
HEALTH OCCUPATIONS	21	2	1	2
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	6			
SCIENCE AND MATH	7			
SOCIAL SCIENCE	10	2	1	1
	78	4	2	3
Spring 1978, full-time				
BUSINESS	8			1
COMMUNICATIONS	6			
DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES	4			
HEALTH OCCUPATIONS	12	1		
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	5			
HUMANITIES	1	2		
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	1			
SCIENCE AND MATH	3	1		
SOCIAL SCIENCE	4			
	44	4		1
Spring 1978, part-time				
BUSINESS	16	2		2
COMMUNICATIONS	4			
DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES	6			
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	1			
HUMANITIES	5			
PHYSICAL EDUCATION		1		1
SCIENCE AND MATH	7			1
SOCIAL SCIENCE	4	2		1
	43	5		5
Cumulative totals N = 189	165 87.3%	13 6.9%	2 1.1%	9 4.8%

7. Attendance policy results -- the numbers of students dropped for non-attendance -- were then investigated.

Figures from Fall 1976 were used to provide a comparative data-base. This one-time administrative audit, by computer, included all full- and part-time faculty, all students enrolled (N = 23,836 separate course enrollments), and all students dropped for non-attendance (N = 4,478 or 18.6%).

Results from Spring 1977 and Spring 1978, though based on questionnaires and thus only partial, were nevertheless comparable.

In Spring 1977, based on 8,172 separate course enrollments reported by 87 full-time instructors, 1,561 (19.1%) were dropped for non-attendance.

In Spring 1978, based on 5,884 separate course enrollments reported by 49 full-time + 53 part-time instructors, 901 (15.3%) were dropped for non-attendance.

This information is included in Table 5.

It is not the intent of the present practicum to investigate whether there is a significant difference in these results; more complete figures would be necessary for that.

Rather, this comparison only seeks to establish that the attendance policies described herein <u>are</u> in effect, and have been used each semester to drop non-attending students at the relatively stable rate of 15 - 20% per semester.

Thus the drop rate reflected by both 1977 and 1978 questionnaires, though partial, would seem to be a reasonably accurate reflection of probable complete figures for their respective semesters.

TABLE 5

NUMBERS OF STUDENTS DROPPED FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

	Responses	Total N on roll	Total dropped for non-at.	200-level sophomore courses		100-level freshman courses		090-level developmental courses	
				N on roll	Dropped non-at.	N on roll	Dropped non-at.	N on roll	Dropped non-at.
Fall 1976 Full-time + part-time faculty (computer audit)	100%	23,836	4,478 18.6%						
Spring 1977 Full-time faculty (N = 193)	87 45.1%	8172	1561 19.1%	2092	302 14.4%	5752	1107 19.2%	328	152 46.3%
Spring 1978 Full-time faculty (N = 198)	49 24.7%	4269	600 14.1%	997	76 7.6%	2996	441 14.7%	276	83 30.1%
Part-time faculty (N = 160)	53 33.1%	1615	301 18.6%	384	41 10.7%	1039	216 20.8%	192	44 22.9%
N = 358	102 28.5%	5884	901 15.3%	1381	117 8.5%	4035	657 16.3%	468	127 27.1%
		37,892	6,940 18.3%	3,473	419 12.1%	9,787	1,764 18.0%	796	279 35.1%

Table 5 also includes a breakdown of students dropped for non-attendance into three categories:

sophomore courses (200-level)

freshman courses (100-level)

developmental/pre-freshman courses (090-level)

Based on 3,473 separate sophomore course enrollments reported, 419 (12.1%) were dropped for non-attendance.

Based on 9,787 separate freshman course enrollments reported, 1,764 (18.0%) were dropped for non-attendance.

Based on 796 separate developmental course enrollments reported, 279 (35.1%) were dropped for non-attendance.

(Numbers of students dropped for non-attendance are further itemized by divisions in Table 6 -- 1977 and Table 7 -- 1978.)

TABLE 6

NUMBERS OF STUDENTS DROPPED FOR NON-ATTENDANCE
BY DIVISIONS -- SPRING 1977

	Responses	Total reported N on roll	Total reported dropped for non-at.	SUBDIVIDED INTO 200-level sophomore courses		100-level freshman courses		090-level developmental courses	
				N on roll	Dropped non-at.	N on roll	Dropped non-at.	N on roll	Dropped non-at.
BUSINESS N = 27	11	958	204 21.3%	243	43 17.7%	715	161 22.5%		
COMMUNICATIONS N = 16	13	1557	328 21.1%	288	43 14.9%	1211	276 22.8%	58	9 15.5%
DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES N = 16	5	378	169 44.7%			108	26 24.1%	270	143 53.0%
FINE AND APPLIED ARTS N = 20	5	443	73 16.5%	52	11 21.1%	391	62 15.9%		
HEALTH OCCUPATIONS N = 58	26	1654	134 8.1%	557	29 5.2%	1097	105 9.6%		
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT N = 15	6	111	25 22.5%			111	25 22.5%		
SCIENCE & MATH N = 21	7	925	178 19.2%	102	21 20.6%	823	157 19.1%		
SOCIAL SCIENCE N = 20	14	2146	450 21.0%	850	155 18.2%	1296	295 22.8%		
N = 193	87 45.1%	8172	1561 19.1%	2092	302 14.4%	5752	1107 19.2%	328	152 46.3%

TABLE 7

NUMBERS OF STUDENTS DROPPED FOR NON-ATTENDANCE
BY DIVISIONS -- SPRING 1978

	Responses	Total reported N on roll	Total reported dropped for non-at.	SUBDIVIDED INTO 200-level sophomore courses		100-level freshman courses		090-level developmental courses	
				N on roll	Dropped non-at.	N on roll	Dropped non-at.	N on roll	Dropped non-at.
Full-time									
BUSINESS N = 28	9	761	133 17.5%	271	28 10.3%	490	105 21.4%		
COMMUNICATIONS N = 16	6	728	141 19.4%	100	15 15.0%	628	126 20.1%		
DEV. STUDIES N = 14	4	380	102 26.8%			104	19 18.3%	276	83 30.1%
HEALTH OCCUPATIONS N = 59	13	940	68 7.2%	304	5 1.6%	636	63 9.9%		
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT N = 24	5	169	17 10.1%			169	17 10.1%		
HUMANITIES N = 19	3	201	36 17.9%	86	8 9.3%	115	28 24.3%		
PHYSICAL EDUCATION N = 3	1	41	3 7.3%	12	0	29	3 10.3%		
SCIENCE & MATH N = 20	4	552	54 9.8%	42	9 21.4%	510	45 8.8%		
SOCIAL SCIENCE N = 15	4	497	46 9.3%	182	11 6.0%	315	35 11.1%		
N = 198	49 24.7%	4269	600 14.1%	997	76 7.6%	2996	441 14.7%	276	83 30.1%
Part-time									
BUSINESS	20	616	114 18.5%	271	29 10.7%	345	85 24.6%		
COMMUNICATIONS	4	165	25 15.2%			165	25 15.2%		
DEV. STUDIES	6	196	44 22.4%			4	0	192	44 22.9%
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	1	37	10 27.0%			37	10 27.0%		
HUMANITIES	5	89	24 27.0%	25	2 8.0%	64	22 34.4%		
PHYSICAL EDUCATION	2	55	9 16.4%			55	9 16.4%		
SCIENCE & MATH	8	255	50 19.6%	9	3 33.3%	246	47 19.1%		
SOCIAL SCIENCE	7	202	25 12.4%	79	7 14.3%	123	18 14.6%		
N = 160	53 33.1%	1615	301 18.6%	384	41 10.7%	1039	216 20.8%	192	44 22.9%
N = 358	102 28.5%	5884	901 15.3%	1381	117 8.5%	4035	657 16.3%	468	127 27.1%

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A fair degree of uniformity now seems to have been achieved in El Centro's attendance policies, particularly among full-time faculty members. In Spring 1977, 86.2%, and in Spring 1978, 83.7% report using an attendance policy in common with the rest of their division, department, or program. The commonality of these group policies has no doubt reinforced the system (and by halo effect, even the independent policies) through giving greater credibility: students feel that faculty is presenting a united front against absences. And most policies have now been in effect for two or more years: In Spring 1977, 90.8% reported using the same policy as the previous semester; in Spring 1978, 98% of full-time and 81.1% of part-time instructors reported using the same policy as the previous year.

A number of part-time teachers seem to be unaware of the background or scope of the attendance policy they use. Many seem surprised by the community college's non-conscientious student, and appreciate the Absentee Reporting System to deal with him. Though they often use the same policy as others in the same division or program, they don't always realize this; hence 47.1% report that the policy they use is "just for my own classes." Their better understanding of the attendance policy's history, as recorded here, might provide a greater respect for and enforcement of it.

Equally important (with their commonality and continuity) in the effectiveness of El Centro's attendance policies is their strong support by the faculty. A convincing 87.3% rated the policies as "good." In the combined full- and part-time faculty, Spring 1978, 38.2% reported

enforcing the policy "rigidly," 55.9% enforce it "moderately," and 4.9% enforce it "loosely." And this is superimposed on defining "excessive absences" within a range of 3 to 20 hours. It would seem a widely flexible system for the instructor -- whose only binding restrictions are that, at the beginning of the semester, he/she must declare his/her attendance rules (having cleared these with the division chairperson), and then administer these at discretion. The policies may seem to be applied more rigidly to the borderline student -- whose excessive absences are likely to prevent his passing the course -- than to the student whose work is strong despite absences. (And perhaps this is as it should be.)

All these factors have contributed to student acceptance of the attendance policies. They have not eliminated the attrition problem, but their relative firmness has made faculty members feel better equipped to deal with it equitably.

One significant result of the present study may be reinforcing the idea that student attendance correlates with student commitment: Presumably, students with least commitment to their college coursework would be those in developmental/pre-freshman courses. They're in a trial period: they're testing the college -- "checking it out" -- and vice versa. This would corroborate the previously cited findings of Jenne, Kohler, Levanto, Karweit, and Wright (see pp. 5-6, above). And a high proportion of "underprepared" students, unlikely candidates for other colleges, might be expected to enroll in these courses. Accordingly, their absences resulted in the highest drop rate: 35.1% on combined 1977-1978 surveys (ranging from a high of 46.3%, full-time faculty 1977,

to 22.9%, part-time faculty 1978). This range may also reflect that most subsidized students (B.E.O.G., etc.) are not employed, and are in day classes with full-time faculty; but most part-time faculty teach evening courses with many older students, employed, with families, and an apparently higher degree of educational commitment.

The second highest drop-rate for non-attendance -- 18.0% -- is in 100-level freshman courses.

The lowest drop-rate for non-attendance -- 12.1% -- is in 200-level sophomore courses. These students are assumed to be the "survivors." They have already demonstrated their educational ability and commitment by passing freshman coursework.

Approached divisionally, elective courses have a lower drop-rate than required courses. As shown in Table 6, Spring 1977, Communications and Social Science divisions (including required English, history, and government courses) each had a 21.% drop rate. Contrast the lowest drop rate: 8.1% (1977) and 7.2% (1978) in the Health Occupations Division, in which there is a waiting list for students who have chosen these careers. Such students complete required general coursework (and thus become "survivors") while awaiting admission to their programs -- all of which reflects a high degree of commitment.

Although figures are too incomplete to be conclusive, a contrast of full-time faculty's drop rates between Spring 1977 and Spring 1978 show a general reduction, perhaps at least reflecting students' indoctrination and acquiescence to the system:

	Drop rate, Spring 1977	Spring 1978
BUSINESS	21.3%	17.5%
COMMUNICATIONS	21.1%	19.4%
DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES	44.7%	26.8%
FINE AND APPLIED ARTS renamed HUMANITIES	16.5%	17.9%
HEALTH OCCUPATIONS	8.1%	7.2%
HUMAN DEVELOPMENT	22.5%	10.1%
SCIENCE AND MATH	19.2%	9.8%
SOCIAL SCIENCE	21.0%	9.3%
MEAN	19.1%	14.1%

Two other areas deserve comment, and perhaps further research:

The dark corner of the attendance policy picture is reinstatement -- the process by which a student who has been dropped for non-attendance may be returned to the roll. Samplings of faculty opinion, together with comments and suggestions on this study's questionnaires, indicate dissatisfaction with the reinstatement process. The instructor fills out a reinstatement contract, which which required make-up work and attendance conditions may be specified; this contract must be signed by instructor, student, division chairperson, and vice-president of instruction. In anything but an independent-study course, however, even the best-intentioned student has a difficult or impossible time in catching up missed classwork to earn a passing grade. Is it dishonest to offer the student such an option, when odds are heavily against his success? How many reinstated students do in fact complete their courses with a passing grade? And what proportion of reinstatement requests

come from students receiving veteran's benefits or other grants, for whom being dropped for non-attendance means loss of income? These areas deserve investigation, possibly resulting in revision or elimination of the reinstatement process.

Another intriguing topic has emerged in this study: An hour's absence is an hour's absence is an hour's absence, etc. Right? Wrong! Some absences are only temporary; they can in effect be removed from the student's record when the time and work are made up (as in Developmental Studies courses, Math Lab, Health Occupations programs' clinicals, etc.) This clearly is an educational opportunity for the student who takes advantage of it. On the other hand, doesn't this system predispose courses which are <u>not</u> equipped to offer make-ups to have a higher absence and attrition rate?

Another gray area: an hour's excused absence is not the same (in many divisions) as an hour's unexcused absence. In the attendance policies of several programs, the student who must be absent is asked to notify the instructor in advance; if the absence is judged to be legitimate, it is "excused" and not held against the student toward being dropped for non-attendance. Only when <u>unexcused</u> absences exceed 10 or 12 hours, in some cases, is the student dropped. The opposite approach is that taken by Communications Division, Social Science Division, etc., where no attempt is made to distinguish between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. These instructors espouse the theory that if absences in excess of X hours prevent achievement of the course's objectives, then this is equally true despite the reasons for the absences; absences exceeding the limit should therefore not be allowed, no matter how valid

the excuses. This policy also relieves the instructor of having to judge the legitimacy of each excuse (an impossible task, anyhow); an hour's absence is an hour's absence.

Unless, of course, an hour's absence is an accumulation of tardies. Some instructors consider two tardies or three tardies = one hour's absence. Here are several other policies on tardies:

In Human Development, 3 tardies = 1 day's absence (1½ hours absence)

In Developmental Writing, 6 tardies = 1 hour's absence.

In Medical Laboratory Technician Program, the number of minutes late are cumulative -- so 50 total minutes tardy = 1 hour's absence.

In Respiratory Therapy, minutes tardy are cumulative and computed as actual time lost times two -- so 25 total minutes tardy x 2 = 1 hour's absence.

Some individual instructors count any tardy over 15 minutes as an absence.

Others have no official policy statement on tardies, and apparently ignore them.

Several questionnaires included remarks on the serious problem of habitual tardies, and the need of many students to break this bad habit before entering careers. If in fact tardies are a bad habit -- which the college has a responsibility to help its students break -- then all faculty members might be urged to somehow include tardies in their attendance policies.

CONCLUSION

El Centro College's attendance policy, while having achieved a fair degree of uniformity in some ways, is paradoxically an almost infinite variety of attendance policies, administered in a variety of ways. It has seemingly been remarkably successful, as a system, in solving the 1976 attendance problems. And it seems to be achieving the several purposes for which it was intended (probably in the following order of increasing importance):

- satisfy requirements of various agencies to which we must report
- maintain maximum administrative flexibility
- maintain the teacher's control of classroom attendance policy
- encourage students' responsibility and work habits
- assist students in accomplishing satisfactory progress in their courses.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

EL CENTRO COLLEGE
of the
Dallas County Community College District

FROM: Genell Kelso DATE: April 19, 1977

TO: All Faculty SUBJECT: Attendance Policies

I am surveying current attendance policies (for a Nova Practicum Project).

This Thursday, April 21, is the last day an instructor may drop a student via the Absentee Reporting System. Please take a bit of time to give me this information:

Your Spring 1977 courses (incl. section numbers)	Number of students listed on roll in each	Number you dropped for excessive absences
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

What is your attendance policy--a student is dropped after how many hours absence?_____
(If it would be easier for you, attach a copy of your attendance policy handout.)

Why this particular number of hours? Did any outside groups, such as state licensing boards, influence your attendance policy?

This particular attendance policy is used

☐ for my own individual classes ☐ by my whole division or program, which is _____ ☐ Other? _____

☐ Is this the same attendance policy you used last semester?

OR

☐ ...if not, what changes were made, and why?

Do you feel the Absentee Reporting System is ☐ good? Why? or ☐ bad? Why?

What changes would you suggest? (Continue on back, if needed.)

Thank you so much. Perhaps you'll be interested in seeing the final report, to compare your policy and reasons with others.

PLEASE RETURN THIS SHEET TO YOUR DIVISION SECRETARY BY NOON THIS FRIDAY. THANKS!

APPENDIX B

EL CENTRO COLLEGE
of the
Dallas County Community College District

FROM: Genell Kelso DATE: April 13, 1978

TO: All Faculty SUBJECT: Attendance Policies

I am doing a follow-up survey of current attendance policies -- to compare with Spring 1977 (for a Nova Practicum Project).

This Tuesday, April 18, is the last day an instructor may drop a student via the Absentee Reporting System. Please take a bit of time to give me this information (whether or not you replied last year):

Your name _____ Division _____

Your Spring 1978 courses (incl. section numbers)	Number of students listed on roll in each	Number you dropped for excessive absences
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

What is your attendance policy--student is dropped after how many hours absence?_____
(If it would be easier for you, attach a copy of your attendance policy handout.)

How would you say you enforce this policy?
☐ rigidly ☐ moderately ☐ loosely

This particular attendance policy is used
☐ by my whole division ☐ by my whole program, which is _____ ☐ just for my own classes ☐ Other?_____

☐ Is this the same attendance policy you used last year?
OR
☐ ... if not, what changes were made, and why?

Do you feel the Absentee Reporting System is ☐ good? Why? or ☐ bad? Why?

What changes would you suggest? (continue on back, if needed)

Thank you so much. Perhaps you'll be interested in seeing the final report, to compare your policy and reasons with others.

PLEASE RETURN THIS SHEET TO YOUR DIVISION SECRETARY BY NOON WEDNESDAY 4/19. THANKS!

APPENDIX C

ATTENDANCE POLICIES USED BY EIGHTEEN DIVISIONS, DEPARTMENTS, OR PROGRAMS

MID-MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, BUSINESS DIVISION

Attendance is most important in a class that meets only one day a week. If you cannot attend class you must notify your instructor before class time. Otherwise you will have an unexcused absence. When you have two unexcused absences you will be sent a notice that you will be dropped from class in 10 days. This means that you are automatically dropped from the Mid-Management Program.

COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION ATTENDANCE POLICY

Class attendance is required. Students who miss 6 class hours in a row or 9 class hours totally will be dropped. This policy does not mean you may miss class without penalty. Each absence may affect your grade, even if you are not dropped. There are no excused absences.

READING PROGRAM, DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES DIVISION

In order to achieve maximum improvement in reading and study skills you must attend each class period. By College policy, after three (3) consecutive absences or six (6) cumulative absences, you will be dropped from the course.
For an absence to be excused you must notify your instructor and make up the time and work missed. (If a class is missed it is the students responsibility to contact the instructor to get information concerning what material or class assignment he or she missed)
Class attendance is 25% of grade.
2 absences not made up = B
3 absences not made up = C
4 absences not made up = D

DEVELOPMENTAL MATH, DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES DIVISION

You are required, by college policy, to attend the classes for which you register. Therefore, if you have three (3) consecutive hours or a total of six (6) hours of unexcused absences, you will be dropped from your course. For an absence to be excused, you must (1) be at least two tests ahead of your test schedule, or (2) make up the time missed within two weeks of the absence. CLASS PERIODS WHICH CAN BE MADE UP ARE LIMITED TO SIX (6). Make up time must be done in time segments equivalent to your class period.

DEVELOPMENTAL WRITING, DEVELOPMENTAL STUDIES DIVISION

Regular attendance is required to receive course credit. The student will be dropped after three consecutive hours of absences or six cumulative hours. Six tardies will be counted as one absence. A dropped student may earn reinstatement by making up the excessive absences by arrangement with the instructor.

ASSOCIATE DEGREE NURSING, HEALTH OCCUPATIONS DIVISION

Lecture: Requirements for attendance in lecture will be that a drop be filed after missing 10 hours of class. Reinstatement will be handled on an individual basis through the classroom instructor.

Clinical Attendance: When a student has accumulated a total of 4 absences from scheduled clinical experiences, either campus lab or hospital, the name is turned in to the Director of the Health Occupations Division. On the fifth absence from clinical experiences, the student will automatically be dropped from Nursing 142 unless it is a hardship case. The hardship case will be handled individually by the Director of Health Occupations.

DENTAL ASSISTING PROGRAM, HEALTH OCCUPATIONS DIVISION

It is most essential for a dantal assistant to have two attributes, promptness and attendance at the dental office.
While you are in college and in the Dental Assisting Program, you will be building these two attributes.
Due to the complexity of the course content, it has been proven that students not attending classes do not achieve well. Therefore, if you expect to complete the course, it is <u>your responsibility</u> to be in class everyday and on time.
<u>Class attendance is the responsibility of the student.</u>
The policy of the Dental Assisting Program is: You will be dropped from the class if you have missed 3 classes in any one course regardless when they are missed.
To be reinstated in the class, you must make an appointment with the instructor for a conference on attendance.

MEDICAL LABORATORY TECHNICIAN PROGRAM, HEALTH OCCUPATIONS DIVISION

A student who misses 10 hours of lecture and/or lab will be dropped from the program. The student may be readmitted by the instructor if the absences were due to illness or injury of the student, death in the immediate family, or otherwise unavoidable situations.
Three unexcused absences will be allowed (not to total more than ten hours). A missed laboratory will count as two of these absences. A student who misses more than ten hours will be dropped from the program.
Lateness to lecture or laboratory will not be tolerated. The student may be admitted to a class in session at the instructor's discretion. The number of minutes late are cumulative. Lateness

plus absences shall not exceed ten hours.

OPERATING ROOM TECHNICIAN PROGRAM, HEALTH OCCUPATIONS DIVISION

Classroom attendance requirements will be according to El Centro policies that require a drop to be filed after missing 10 hours of class or 4 consecutive absences. Reinstatement will be handled on an individual basis by the coordinator and faculty of the ORT Program...
Clinical attendance: When a student has accumulated a total of 4 absences from scheduled clinical experiences, either campus or hospital, the name will be turned into the coordinator of the ORT Program and the Chairperson of the Health Occupations Division. On the 5th absence from the clinical experiences, the student will automatically be given a failing grade in the course and dropped from the program unless it is a hardship case.

RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM, HEALTH OCCUPATIONS DIVISION

Classroom attendance: Student will be dropped from class after missing 10 hours, or less, in any course.
Clinical attendance: THERE ARE NO EXCUSED CLINICAL ABSENCES AT ANY TIME. All clinical absences must be made up during the summer break in the areas missed on an equal time basis and primarily under the supervision of El Centro College Instructors.
Maximum number of make up days will be limited to summer break allocations.
If, at any time, the number of absences exceeds the make up time available the student will be dropped.

RESPIRATORY THERAPY PROGRAM, HEALTH OCCUPATIONS DIVISION

Each absence, uxcused or unexcused, from any scheduled class meeting must be explained in writing within 48 hours of its occurrence.
No make-up quizzes, "extra credit" work or special projects will be arranged for absences from clinicals, labs, or lectures. A grade of "zero" will be entered and averaged for work missed because of unexcused absence. Habitual tardiness is evidence of poor attitude. Times lost by tartiness is cumulative and computed as actual time lost times two.
Clinical instructors must be informed in advance by telephone of anticipated absence from clinical activities. The exception to this, obviously, is serious and unavoidable mishap encountered enroute to the clinical assignment.
If repeated tardiness appears likely and unavoidable because of job commitments, this must be discussed, in advance, with the instructor, explained in detail in writing, and witnessed by the student's technical director or chief therapist.
Following the second unexcused absence from a clinical or laboratory, the student will be dropped.
Following the third hour of unescused absence from lecture, the student will be dropped.

VOCATIONAL NURSING PROGRAM , HEALTH OCCUPATIONS DIVISION

Attendance is mandatory. Each student is responsible for missed assignments. Students will be given a warning notice when 4 hours of absence accumulates. If the student continues to miss class, and accumulates 6 hours of absence, he/she will be dropped. Should you feel this action is unjust, you must contact me immediately. If you do not contact me, a grade of "W" will appear on your final grade report. (Successful completion of all spring courses is a pre-requisite for enrollment in subsequent semesters.)

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

Since the course content in a Human Development class is designed around you, the student, class attendance is of the utmost importance. Therefore, when a student has accumulated a total of three (3) hours of class absences, the instructor will initiate a drop procedure for the student.
If the student is dropped, he will be notified by mail. If for any reason he feels that this action is unjustified, he must contact the instructor immediately.
This policy is in no way intended to lighten the importance of regular class attendance. The student is expected to attend each class meeting because each absence affects his success in the course.
NOTE: 1. Three (3) tardies will equal one (1) day's absence.
2. A student may discuss the assignment of extra work to make up absences with the instructor.
3. A student can be officially dropped from the course after three absences.

HUMANITIES DIVISION

Part of the minimal requirements for receiving credit for this course includes being in class every time it meets. There are no "free" absences. You are responsible for what happens and what is assigned every class period. Should some crisis arise, such as illness, you are to notify the instructor and make arrangements for compensating for the absence. Should you miss three lectures or three labs you will be dropped from the class. You can be reinstated (1) if you and your instructor come to an agreement concerning your course make-up work; (2) a reinstatement contract is made between you and your instructor; (3) the contract is filed with the Division Chairman.

MATH LAB, SCIENCE AND MATH DIVISION

Class attendance is verified by removing your name tag from the board as you enter the classroom during your regular scheduled class time and by remaining in the lab for the full period. Your instructor will pick up your name tag from you during the period or you may lay it on the front desk as you leave. You are expected to attend class regularly unless you are two tests ahead on your minimal testing schedule.

Call your instructor if you must be absent more than a couple of times. After 6 class hours of absences, you can expect to receive a letter stating that you will be dropped as of a certain date. Unless you request reinstatement you will be dropped.

BIOLOGY DEPARTMENT, SCIENCE AND MATH DIVISION

Excessive absences will be reported through established procedures of the college. Excessive absence is defined as four (4) consecutive class hours or an accumulation of eight (8) class hours. One laboratory session shall be considered equivalent to two (2) lecture sessions. Upon accumulating the above absences the student will be sent a warning from the registrar's office. Failure to respond within ten (10) days from the issuance of this warning will result in the student being dropped from the course with a grade of "W." This is in keeping with El Centro policy. Response to this warning consists of an individual consultation with the instructor. Reinstatement action will be initiated only when the instructor believes it is warranted or when justified by administrative appeal.

TELEVISION AND RADIO ELECTRONICS PROGRAM, SCIENCE AND MATH DIVISION

Roll will be called at the beginning of each class. Those not present at time roll is called will be counted absent. In case of late arrival to a class, these students will be indicated as tardy.
Students accumulating twelve unexcused absences during the semester will be dropped from the roll.
Students accumulating twelve unexcused tardy marks will be dropped from the roll.
Excused absences or tardiness will typically be at the discretion of the instructor. Example of typical acceptable excuses will be a note from the Doctor, note from guardian. Some limited amount of excuses will be accepted verbally by the instructor.
Once a student has been dropped from the class roll, reinstatement back into the class is at the discretion of the instructor.

SOCIAL SCIENCE DIVISION

Class attendance: Students are expected to attend regularly all classes in which they are enrolled. Class attendance is the responsibility of the student.
Drop action will be initiated when a student's absences have reached a cumulative total of six class hours.
Reinstatement action will be initiated only when the instructor believes he may have been in error in the decision to drop the student or when reinstatement is substantiated through administrative appeal.

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